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Oakland-B

Newspaper spurns offer to arbitrate strike issues

By DOUGLAS ILKA
News Staff Writer

Leaders of the two unions striking the Oakland Press are predicting a long, drawn-out battle after officials of the Pontiac-based newspaper rejected an offer to submit bargaining differences to binding arbitration.

In a meeting with Federal Mediator William Latimore yesterday, both unions — Local 13 of the Detroit Newspaper Printing and Graphic Communications Union and the Newspaper Guild — offered to return to work and to submit the contract talks to binding arbitration.

"The Oakland Press is unwilling to submit the issues to arbitration or to an outside third party," answered Michael Zinzer, a Tennessee attorney representing Capitol Cities Communications, the owners of the newspaper. "Our position has not changed."

Bruce H. McIntyre, the paper's publisher, was unavailable for comment on his written threat to "replace" all striking employees who did not report to work yesterday.

Willard Hatch, Newspaper Guild executive secretary, said that McIntyre had not fired any striking employees. But he said the newspaper management has brought in some nonunion replacements for the strikers.

"Obviously, they haven't replaced all of them," he

said. "But they haven't fired anybody — that would be illegal. No one has lost his job, and no one's going to, either."

Dennis Foley, unit chairman of the Newspaper Guild, said none of the strikers returned to work because the replacement threat was an expected action.

"The replacement threat doesn't carry any weight with us," Foley said.

"I still have my replacement letter from 1973 when we went on strike for six days. Everybody was rehired after the contract was settled.

"Besides, the replacements had already arrived last week and have been on our jobs."

Foley added that the replacements came from Capitol Cities Communications' papers in Kansas City and Fort Worth. McIntyre has refused to discuss the personnel who are putting out the paper, which has continued to publish throughout the 11-day strike.

"It should be crystal clear now who wants an agreement and who doesn't," said Hatch.

"We will continue the boycott effort until we demonstrate to the owners that the local Pontiac community won't tolerate their actions."

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"Our problem is that we are not dealing with owners from the local area. We are dealing with people from New York and Tennessee who don't understand the local community."

Hatch said the union will step up boycott efforts. He claimed that buying the Oakland Press is the same as crossing a picket line. The strike has been endorsed by numerous area unions including the UAW, which has more than 30,000 members in the Pontiac area.

Don Kummer, president of Local 13, said it would be a long time before any progress was made in negotiations.

"We have to force them (the owners) to take another look by reducing their circulation and advertising," Kummer said.

"There are a dozen separate issues keeping us apart. They relate to clauses we have in previous contracts that the company wants to remove.

"We're not ready to throw things out of the contract that we negotiated for over a number of years."

Kummer said among those specific issues are economics, job security, health insurance and retirement benefits.

No new bargaining sessions have been scheduled.

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